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Americanizing a city

New York

1915

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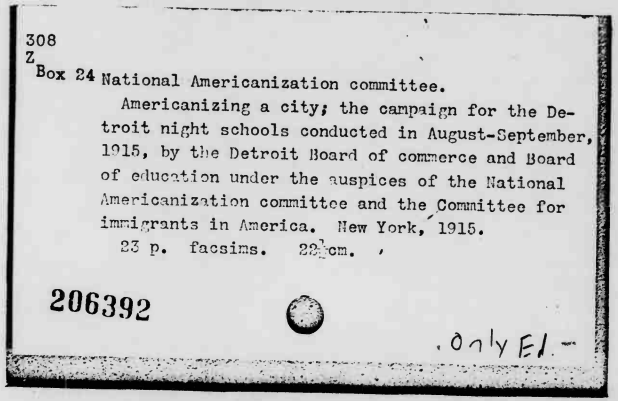

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Box 24 National Americanization committee.
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Box 24

Americanizing a City

Americanizing a City

The Campaign for the Detroit Night Schools Conducted in August-September, 1915, by The Detroit Board of Commerce and Board of Education, under the auspices of the National Americanization Committee and the Committee for Immigrants in America

Issued by the
National Americanization Committee
and the
Committee for Immigrants in America
20 West 34th Street, New York City,
December 15, 1915.

Mem. 16-1916-B52

Americanizing a City

Getting the Adult Immigrant to School

IF every city and town in the country today were to provide night classes in which its non-English speaking adult population could learn English and the first principles of American citizenship, we should have the *machinery* for Americanization. For while Americanization means much more than the English language and civics, English is the indispensable key. A general provision for teaching it would be a tremendous achievement, for we have never had this before. We now have facilities for perhaps one immigrant in ten in the best equipped states, and for none at all in some states. We have requirements for naturalization and—no facilities for meeting them. We tell every immigrant that to be a citizen and a competent resident of the United States, he must be able to use the English language and show that he is "attached to the principles of the Constitution." But we have not thought it our responsibility to provide the ways and means. And therefore if night schools and classes on an adequate scale were now provided for in every community with a considerable foreign-born population, we should have at least an Americanization policy and program; and we should be infinitely further along on the road to national unity than we now are.

But though we should have the machinery, we should not have Americanization. We should still have to connect the immigrant with the schools. At present this necessity represents half the battle of Americanization. We have so long left to chance and to the principle of the survival of the fittest the Americanization of our great foreign-born population that we cannot now by any single measure deal adequately with the situation we have created. What that situation is needs no exposition here; the headlines of the last six months, the history of strikes among foreign-born colonies in munition factories and elsewhere, the catalogue of newly formed "leagues" and "societies," the racial meetings, programs and resolutions, are a sufficient index. What America is facing now is not simply the *economic* problem of giving the immigrant a chance as a piece of benevolent paternalism; in the large number of unassimilated groups in our factories and towns, we are facing a vast *social* problem involving our national unity, the preservation of a uniform ideal of citizenship, the maintenance of industrial peace, and the conservation of a social ideal based on the use of the English language, a regard for American citizenship and American standards of living.

We must have the night schools and classes as speedily as possible. But behind every one that is established we must have the social force of the particular community, all its agencies, all its resources, all its civic sympathies, if the future of American citizenship is really to be assured. No educational department can carry the work through alone. These are some of the reasons why it cannot:

(1) The immigrant population has not been invited to go to school before; it will be distrustful now.

(2) A good many immigrants will never even know about the night schools—where they are located, when they are open, for whom they are intended, what they will teach—unless special effort is made to carry the news to them.

(3) Some of them work ten or twelve hours a day. Some of them change their shifts every week or every two weeks. They are not likely to think that a night school from seven to nine for four nights every week has much to do with them. If they finish work at six o'clock, even those who know about the schools and are interested are not likely to feel that they could go home, get supper, wash and change their clothes, and get to night school in time.

(4) Those in the lowest grade of American labor—working for from $1.50 to $1.70 daily—perhaps have long come to feel themselves cut off from the ascending current of American industry. They are not likely to feel that any civic opportunities are intended for them, or that indeed there is any point in trying to reach such opportunities.

The conclusion is this: As a result of our long continued policy or lack of policy, getting immigrants into night schools on a scale that covers the needs of any community, has become a civic experiment taxing every community resource.

It is the purpose of this sketch to show how this can be done by outlining such an experiment recently conducted in Detroit.

The end attained in this case was not only an increase of 153% in the actual registration in the night schools, but the awakening of the city of Detroit to its vast immigration problem, the assumption of definite responsibilities by many employers and others, the socializing of very varied community forces in coöperating to this one end—the Americanization of a peculiarly heterogeneous and unassimilated city.

What was done in Detroit can be done in every city or town that has an unassimilated foreign population and a night school.

Why Detroit was an Appropriate Place for the Experiment:

Detroit is a typical immigration laboratory of the country. The development of the city within the last decade may be indexed under two heads: the automobile industry, and immigration. Not many years ago, Detroit was a beautiful unified town, provincial in its ideal, of conservative French-American traditions. To-day it typifies at home and abroad an expanding center of American industrialism. The small town current is still there; but it has been deflected at a hundred points by the workshops of national industries. The small town grace and the small town prejudice are still there also; but they have been invaded at a hundred points by all the races of the earth, and all the destinies of cosmopolitan America. The destiny of America has precipitated itself into Detroit. And Detroit, while proud of its industrial significance, proud of the swiftly flowing life within it, of its rapid passage to distinction in the eyes of America and of the world, is nevertheless dazed at being thus overtaken. As a typical cosmopolitan city of America, it has not yet accepted or found itself.

The tide has come on too quickly to make this possible. A summary of the last five years proves that. The population of Detroit in 1910 was 465,766. It is now about 700,000. An increase of 300,000 in a space of five years tells half of the story of the present-day Detroit. By a rapid expansion of the automobile industry, a city was grafted upon a town. By the importation of hundreds of thousands of foreign workmen, a comparatively small city with the ideals, the housing, the general intentions of the town it supplanted became in population the seventh city in the country, and in industrial importance perhaps third or fourth. The map of Detroit is now a map of nations. Two great Polish sections cover together perhaps a fourth of the city's area; well in the centre of the city is a solid Italian section. One whole end of the city is practically solid Hungarian—and Russians, Greeks, Roumanians, Servians, Jews, Belgians, Armenians, constitute smaller groups throughout. There are a half dozen cities, distinct in type, within the city's boundaries.

In 1910, 33% of the population was foreign born, and 74% was either foreign born or of foreign-born parentage. It is safe to assume that the 300,000 increase in population since 1910 has not lessened these percentages.

The Detroit factories are placing the city high in production, high in importance in America. They are working out the type of American industry. But thousands of them are not working out the type of American citizenship or American workmen at all.

That, says the practical observer, *is not the business of industry.* And this is true. It is not the business of industry alone; nor of the public educational system alone; nor of municipal government alone; nor of private social organizations alone. It is the business of all of these and it will require

them all. Detroit has been referred to as the most American of our cities. To make this true in any except an industrial sense requires a work of assimilation so stupendous that every constructive force in the city will be taxed to its utmost to accomplish it. The work has been begun, and *only* begun, in the campaign to fill the night schools. But the union of the community forces attained in this campaign gives promise for the future, and points a social ideal for other communities, in the same direction.

That "English first" is the rational first step in Americanization is well illustrated by Detroit. Many thousands of the foreign born of Detroit do not speak English. In 1910 the non-English speaking numbered 38,038. In 1915, with a population increased by 300,000 the number of those unable to read, write, speak or understand English must have been extraordinarily increased. Last year 2,838 were enrolled in the public night schools. Allowing for those learning English in parochial schools or private classes, it is still evident that although a very considerable percentage of Detroit's population was unable to manage its affairs through the English language and to secure the approach to American institutions which only a knowledge of English can guarantee, *only a very small percentage of these was on the road to learning English and preparing for American citizenship.*

The Campaign Made Possible.

Last spring the Board of Education secured from the Board of Estimate a night school appropriation for 1915-16 double that of former years. This meant that there could be more elementary night schools; that they could be held four nights a week instead of three; that the season could cover 100 nights instead of 70.

The Board of Education wished to justify the experiment and fill the night schools. It turned first of all to the Board of Commerce, believing that the employer of immigrant labor could direct non-English speaking workmen to the schools in a manner not open to the Board of Education.

The Board of Commerce in Active Charge of the Campaign.

The request for coöperation met no perfunctory response. The Board of Commerce had already instituted an Americanization program of its own. Its relief work for the unemployed through the winter of 1914-15 is well known. Of the thousands that besieged its Employment Bureau, the Board of Commerce had found that 61% of the unemployed could not speak English and that the demand everywhere at this period of excess labor was for English-speaking men. The non-English speaking men were the first to be laid off and the last to be taken on.

As a result of this experience the Board of Commerce had invited the cooperation of the Committee for Immigrants in America in making an immigrant survey of Detroit. Upon the basis of the recommendations included in this report, the Board of Commerce had appointed a special committee and formulated a year's work, with the ultimate object of establishing a City Immigration Bureau. Immediately upon the receipt of the request from the Board of Education, this Committee decided to make the night school campaign its first work.

Industries Give Active Support.

The Board of Commerce, as a first step, sent out a letter to every Detroit industry employing over 100 men, requesting coöperation in urging all non-English speaking workmen in Detroit to register at the evening schools on September 13.

The replies received to the first letter indicated that the importance of the campaign was immediately recognized by employers. Representatives of industries employing large numbers of immigrants were thereupon invited to meet at luncheon with the Education Committee of the Board of Commerce. Here employers told of the conditions existing within their own plants, and suggested the exact ways in which they would find it most feasible to urge night school attendance upon their men.

As a result of the suggestions received at several of these luncheons, the Board of Commerce submitted the following plan to every industry in the city employing a considerable number of immigrants:

Proposed Plan

I. That some executive officer of the company take a personal interest in this work and follow its progress among the employees of his company.

II. That some intelligent person in the superintendent's office, the welfare department, or the employment office, be assigned to the work, his reports receiving the personal attention of the executive officer suggested above.

III. Instruct your employment office to ask all foreigners who apply for work, questions similar to the following:

1. How long have you been in America?..... In Detroit?.....
2. Can you talk English?..... Can you read and write English?.....
3. Have you been to night school?..... How long?..... When?..... Will you join at once?.....
4. Have you taken out first citizenship papers?..... When?..... Show them..... Date?.....
5. Have you taken out final papers?..... When?..... (Not asked if No. 4 is answered in negative.) If not, are you qualified to take these out?..... Will you do so as soon as possible?.....

After asking these questions, a statement similar in purpose to the following, can be made:

"There is no place in our factory, in Detroit, or in this country, for men who are not trying to learn our language, and become good, useful citizens."

IV. That a record may be made of every alien employee now working in your factory, showing, among other things, the information which it is suggested should be asked of all foreigners who apply for work, as indicated above.

V. Inform all superintendents and foremen having supervision over foreign workmen in regard to the courses offered foreigners in the public night schools, and the location of these schools, and instruct them to use all possible pressure to get their men to enroll and attend regularly.

VI. Tell all foreign workers through their foremen or through interpreters that they must learn to speak the English language at once, so that your company will not have to talk with them through interpreters.

VII. Distribute through the pay envelope, slips informing the workers about the night schools, or better still, have slips handed to each workman personally by some person prepared to give the men information on the spot.

VIII. On Wednesday, September 8th, have all workmen gather together at some convenient point in the factory for five or six minutes, and have the executive officer in charge of this work talk to them through such interpreters as may be necessary about the night schools, and the advantages that will accrue to them if they will attend.

IX. During the week of September 13th have a record made of every foreign employee who has enrolled in the night schools. It will be better if this information is secured directly by a representative of the employer from the workman. Periodically arrange to have someone talk to the workers about their progress at these schools, and find out whether they are attending regularly, and how well they are getting along; encourage them to stick to it by a little genuine friendly interest. The school authorities, upon request, will make reports of attendance and class standing to employers.

X. In the event that you have to lay off any workmen, give preference, whenever possible, to men who are attending night schools, and otherwise conscientiously endeavoring to increase their value as workmen and citizens and tell them why. Let the man who is being laid off understand that he would have stood a better chance of being retained by the company, if he were doing something to learn English and become an American citizen.

Attached to the plan as sent out to the industries were these suggestions:

Tell Your Foreign Workmen on September 8th at Noon and on Every Other Possible Occasion That

1. They should enroll in the night school nearest them on September 13th at 7:00 p. m.

2. It is easier to get a job in America if they know English. (Many firms will take only English-speaking men.) Firms prefer the men who are making an effort to learn English when given the opportunity.

3. It is easier to keep a job in America and in Detroit if they learn English. Non-English-speaking men are the last to be taken on and the first to be laid off.

4. Sixty-one per cent of the unemployed that applied at the Board of Commerce last winter could not speak English.

If they had known English, work could have been found for many more of them. A knowledge of English is the first step toward American citizenship. It is impossible to become an American citizen without it.

5. The public night schools will show men how to become citizens and will show them how to take out first and second papers.

6. By attending the night schools they will learn the principles of national, state and city government in America. They will learn how to become intelligent voters in Detroit and help to settle the affairs of the community in which they live.

7. They will learn how to protect their savings and make safe investments, and how to conduct their business affairs and protect their interests in America.

8. They will learn how to make their homes real American homes.

9. Their wives should attend the night school also. It is important for women to learn English in order to deal with tradesmen, and to keep up with their children and their husbands.

10. They will be able to do for themselves some of the things they now have to pay others to do for them.

11. Tell them to choose the night school which is nearest to their homes on September 13th. (List of schools followed.)

The reception given this plan is indicated by the following extracts from letters.

DETROIT STOVE WORKS. "This company will be glad to co-operate with your committee in calling the attention of our employees to the advantages and opportunities offered to all who attend the night schools."

DODGE BROTHERS. "We realize that it will be necessary for us to work out our own method, but you may rest assured that we will do everything we possibly can to induce our workers to attend the night school."

DETROIT CITY GAS COMPANY. "This company will be glad to co-operate with your committee, calling the attention of our employees to the advantages and opportunities offered to all persons who attend night schools."

DETROIT CAN COMPANY. "I am endeavoring to arrange a meeting of our employees who do not talk, read or write the English language, and hope to have a gentleman present from the People's State Bank to talk to the different nationalities in their own language along the line suggested in your communication."

GENERAL ALUMINUM & BRASS MFG. CO. "We will most certainly follow these suggestions."

A. HARVEY'S SONS MANUFACTURING CO. "We are pleased to reply that we will be very glad to co-operate in any way with you in order to accomplish general improvement of non-English-speaking employees."

MICHIGAN NUT AND BOLT WORKS. "I believe that we have the work well lined up in our own plant, but to insure no possible failure of prompt attention being given to any communication you may have for us, please mail direct to our secretary, any posters or literature that may be intended for us."

MICHIGAN STOVE COMPANY. "We have in our works a great many employees who do not speak English, and naturally we are interested in the concerted effort that is to be made along the lines suggested in your letter, and we are willing and anxious to co-operate with the committee in carrying forward this movement."

MORGAN & WRIGHT. "I might say that 50 per cent. of our employees are foreigners, and, as you will see, it will be quite an undertaking for us to go into this as thoroughly as we would desire. However, we desire to assure you that we will endeavor as much as possible to forward this movement."

NORTHERN ENGINEERING WORKS. "We wish to state that we are pleased to do anything that we can along this line of work. We have not many employees who cannot speak English. We have some, however, who speak English quite brokenly and no doubt would avail themselves of the opportunity of taking up further study of English in the night schools, as suggested."

NORTHWAY MOTOR & MFG. CO. "It has been my duty to make a personal canvass of the shop, and I have made a list of the men (225 at present) who do not speak, read or write English. Every man on the list will receive a personal letter addressed to his home, explaining to him the advantages of his learning English and of the opportunity given him in the night school, and urging him to attend.

"I will talk to many personally and do all my best in answering all questions and giving them the necessary directions. After the first or second session of the night school, I will check my list of the men and will arrange according to the result for a class or more of English to be held here at the plant."

PACKARD MOTOR CAR COMPANY. "Referring to your letter of September 7th. This matter has all been taken care of; the workmen were assembled and the information distributed. This movement will be met with hearty co-operation by the Packard Motor Car Company and its officials."

THE PENINSULAR STOVE COMPANY. "I certainly approve of the work that the 'Board' has undertaken and would be glad to co-operate with your committee."

PAIGE-DETROIT. "You may rest assured that I will be glad to push along the good cause to the limit."

REGAL MOTOR CAR COMPANY. "Your communication regarding the interesting of all foreign-speaking working men in the English language has been noted with approval."

SAXON MOTOR COMPANY. "We are thoroughly in accord with the efforts you are making toward the education in English of the non-English-speaking workers. *"We will make it imperative* for all members of our force who do not speak English to attend the night schools this winter."

In some cases "Safety First" departments took charge of the work; in others, organized welfare departments; in others, an executive of the company made himself personally responsible.

Practically all industries agreed in putting up posters, assembling the men to urge night school attendance, and issuing the pay envelope slips provided by the Board of Education.

Slips Provided by the Board of Education

FOR FOREIGNERS

EVENING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

LEARN HOW TO BECOME AN AMERICAN CITIZEN
LEARN TO READ AND WRITE ENGLISH
AND TO DO ARITHMETIC

ENROLL AT THE SCHOOL NEAREST TO YOUR HOME

Classes Start Monday, September 13th at 7:00 o'clock

ASK THE BOSS

Board of Education, City of Detroit

Cass Technical High School Print 7-9-15 50 M

Many employers *at once* made it clear to their men that from this time on the firm would prefer those men that were attending night school and making a definite effort to learn English.

But a considerable number of firms went much farther than this. The Saxon Company made night school attendance *compulsory* for its non-English speaking workmen.

The Northway Company established a factory class and then gave its non-English speaking men a threefold choice: (1) to attend the factory class; (2) to attend the public night school; (3) to be laid off.

These are drastic measures. But it is important to remember that they are based upon the existence of fairly adequate facilities for attaining the required standards. Certain employers considered that only by thus using their strategic position to convince their workmen of the *need* of English could they make Detroit a city of English speaking workmen and English speaking social communities. They regarded the paternalism involved in making night school attendance mandatory as a temporary exigency.

Other industries worked on a different principle. The Cadillac Company, opposed to any semblance of compulsion, preferred assembling its men in groups and attempting to promote night school attendance by popularizing the night school idea among the leaders of the various groups.

The Solvay Company proposed a wage increase of two cents an hour to its employees who learned the English language.

"I am convinced," said the efficiency engineer of the Semet-Solvay plant, "that only through employers offering a material inducement to the foreign laborer to learn English will the public night schools for non-English-speaking operatives be made a success. . . . The foreigner must be shown that it will be of material advantage to him in his job to learn the English tongue. This the employer can well afford to do, for the non-English-speaking laborer is a source of danger to himself and everybody else about the plant. I should be afraid to estimate the aggregate amount of waste each year to this company through a non-English-speaking operative's failing to understand an order, with a resultant costly blunder. I have known a single blunder to cost as much as $2,000. Then there are thousands paid out for injuries, many of which may be traced directly to the inability of the employee to understand English."

One definite result of the campaign, for all industries, was to make them conscious of their non-English speaking employees. Most firms immediately upon being asked to co-operate made some kind of census to find out at least how many of their men did not speak English and were proper subjects for a night school campaign.

The very first returns came in, naturally, from a firm employing a small number of non-English speaking men, only eighty-one. There was a mixture of amazement and pride in the manner in which an official of the firm reported the result of the census: of the eighty-one men seventy-eight declared themselves eager to go to night school, of which they had known nothing. The other three felt they were too old to learn English.

The census acquainted employers with their workmen. "The non-English speaking workman has never been one of our problems," said the welfare worker in one large plant. "I never knew before that we had more than a very few." Yet there were between five and six hundred non-English speaking employees in that plant; a colony of six hundred non-English speaking workmen is large enough to have a powerful influence on industrial and social life, even if it had never become a "problem" or a body of strikers within the plant.

In short, the interest given by Detroit employers was not merely a temporary thing, but a broad constructive interest, on a civic basis. It looked toward the future, and realized that even when the schools were filled, three-fourths of the work was yet to be done. The result was a willingness to follow the progress of their men *throughout the term.*

Probably not an employer in Detroit would have challenged the value of the night school idea. But some employers have never had opportunity to learn its practical advantages to their own plants, and its vast civic possibilities. With this in mind, Henry Ford invited sixty representative employers of Detroit to luncheon at the Ford Plant in order that they might observe the Ford English school—attendance at which is mandatory for non-English speaking workmen—in operation, and be convinced of the practicability of having English speaking workmen in a short time.

As the campaign advanced there was a very noticeable growth in the civic enthusiasm among employers. "A year or two ago," said one of the most prominent employers of the city, "my friends laughed at my dream of an English speaking factory. I believe I shall see it in a few years."

To follow up this interest, and to keep employers in touch with the experiment, the Board of Commerce asked employers to follow definitely by personal visits and by inspection of records the progress of the night schools. The Chalmers Motor Company at once had a card printed to provide for such a record for every non-English speaking employee.

Board of Education Follows Up Work of Industries

The Superintendent of the Board of Education met every situation presented to him by industry. A number of firms whose men changed from night to day shifts every week or two weeks consulted him. He assured them that special classes for such men would be arranged wherever numbers made it at all possible. The Morgan and Wright Company, employing hundreds of non-English speaking men have particularly late daily hours, owing to the nature of their work. It would be impossible for their men to reach the night school session in time. The Board of Education guaranteed to furnish ten regular teachers for classes to be held at night in the Morgan and Wright plant, if they would equip ten classrooms. By this arrangement between 700 and 800 men who must otherwise have been denied the night school advantages could be included in its benefits. The Board of Commerce in making the arrangement recommended that part of the time thus spent in the classroom be company time, that the men be able to get supper in the factory, and that adequate facilities for recreation be included.

Church and Priests Aid

There can be no question that employers hold the chief strategic position in such a campaign. But—their influence is often more forceful than sympathetic, for aside from the job they know very little about the motive forces in the lives of the men to whom they issue pay envelopes. It is extremely important to have the message of the night school carried to immigrants by persons and powers for whom they have a spiritual respect. In many cases, this influence *par excellence* is that of the priest.

The minister of every foreign church was asked to announce the night school opening, with a strong recommendation to attend, to his congregation on the two Sundays immediately preceding the opening. Many of them called up the Board of Commerce or wrote saying that they were glad to co-operate.

On the day before registration day, a Sunday, the Board of Commerce had handbills to be distributed at the various foreign churches at the close of services. The Police Commissioner requested that because of a prohibitory city ordinance the distributors stand well within the church property. A letter was sent to all the churches asking that the priests and pastors telephone to the Board of Commerce if they had any objection to this. *Not one objection was received* although the procedure was extraordinary for many churches. Many telephone messages were sent to say that the distributors would be welcome and that the ushers would give any assistance desired.

A number of the large Polish and Italian parishes conduct night classes for adults. Because of this and because of the traditional prejudice on both sides between public and parochial schools, it was prophesied that not much active aid in the campaign would be secured from the Catholic clergy, powerful as they were. The prophecy was not borne out. First, the public education authorities proposed conferences with parochial school teachers, in the fall, with reference to exchanging experience and attaining uniform methods of teaching citizenship and English; secondly, several of the priests personally visited showed an active interest in the whole question of Americanization, and threw their support into the cause for their parish.

Father Herr, a Polish priest, with a parish of 25,000 Poles within which, except among the children, the English language in rarely heard, issued a statement commending the Americanization campaign to the Poles of Detroit, and urging a better and broader American citizenship:

"The church stands firm for the education of its young in the schools of its own creation," said Father Herr. "Yet it can see nothing but good in the plan to educate mature non-English speaking foreigners in the public night schools, and in the reinforcement of this by the factory schools in which the foreigner may obtain the nomenclature of his job."

Those who know the power of the church forces in the lives of the Polish immigrant, for instance, realize well how slow and retarded must be any community process of Americanization that has not the support of the church, and appreciate the true value of the significant spirit of co-operation thus demonstrated in the Detroit campaign.

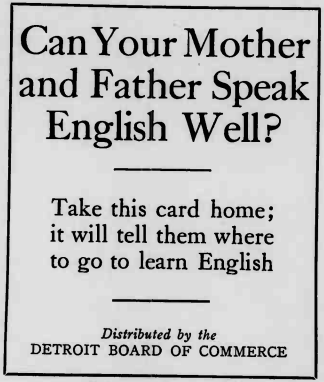
Municipal Departments and Agencies

The *public libraries* placed the large colored Americanization poster at headquarters and at all their branches.

The libraries also worked out a careful distribution system by which all books issued to immigrant children contained a folded card issued by the Board of Commerce.

Inside the folder was a sentence in various languages, addressed to the parents and telling them where to register for night school work. There is no better medium than immigrant children for making a message really reach the mother and father. The children were proud of the charge. Since in addition to the regular branch libraries Detroit has many public school branches which are very active in the summer in all sections of the city, this was an important way of reaching immigrant houses. The heads of all these branch libraries also co-operated by sending in to those in charge of the campaign the names of foreign born men and women with great influence in their community and great power for promoting the night schools among their own people.

The *City Recreation Commission* distributed five thousand similar cards to immigrant children through their playgrounds and swimming pools, and supplied several workers to visit various small shops in the immigrant sections and interest shopkeepers in putting up the display posters. They performed the same service at the small moving picture houses in these sections.


Can Your Mother and Father Speak English Well?
Take this card home; it will tell them where to go to learn English
Distributed by the
DETROIT BOARD OF COMMERCE

Front page of library folder

The *Health Board* instructed its sixty visiting nurses to carry around handbills issued in seven languages by the Board of Commerce and make definite appeals to each family that both men and women go to night school.

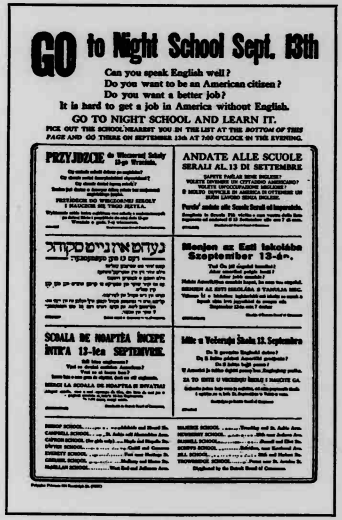
The *Poor Commission* in all departments of its work used the handbills and followed the same methods; further, the Poor Commission instituted at the main office a regular policy of

making it clear to the non-English-speaking men and women that came there for assistance that they were *expected* to learn the English language, and that taking advantage of the night school facilities was for them a practical obligation.

The *Juvenile Court* arranged to issue handbills with all widows' pension papers.

Social Agencies

Probably every social agency in Detroit that had any approach to foreign-speaking men and women contributed some aid. Workers were lent especially by the Associated Charities, which acted as a clearing house for all the social agencies of the city in the campaign. One field worker was detailed by the Associated Charities to cover an important immigrant section just outside the city limits, and interest the women in registering at the public night schools. The men of this section are chiefly taken care of in the Ford English school.


GO to Night School Sept. 13th
Can you speak English well?
Do you want to be an American citizen?
Do you want a better job?
It is hard to get a job in America without English.
GO TO NIGHT SCHOOL AND LEARN IT.
PICK OUT THE SCHOOL NEAREST YOU IN THE LIST AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS PAGE AND GO THERE ON SEPTEMBER 13th AT 7:00 O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING.
PRZYJDZIE
ANDATE ALLE SCUOLE SERALI AL 13 DI SETTEMBRE
Skolan ar Ett Inkoleho September 13-de.
SCOALA DE NOAPTEA INCEPE INTR'A 13-lea SEPTEMVRE.

Board of Commerce Handbill

Most of the social agencies of the city, public and private, gave definite assistance both at their headquarters and also through their investigators, visitors and branch offices. Some of the agencies which gave definite instructions to their workers on the subject of night schools, which circulated handbills through their specific channels, and in other ways contributed to the campaign were: The Y. M. C. A., the Railroad Y. M. C. A., the Babies' Milk Fund, the Michigan Children's Home Society, the Provident Loan Association, the Women's Hospital and Infant's Home, the Children's Aid Society, the Girl's Protection League, the Harper Hospital, the Florence Crittenton Home, the Salvation

Army, The Neighborhood House, the Chase Street Settlement, the Neighborhood Committee, the Associated Charities, the Solvay Lodge, the Volunteers of America, McGregor Institute, and Grace Hospital. The United Hebrew Charities did active work throughout the Yiddish section, distributing handbills and seeing that the display posters were put up in small shops.

Employment Agencies

The three main employment bureaus of Detroit, the Employers' Association Bureau, the Michigan State Free Employment Bureau and the Federal Employment Bureau were especially interested in pressing the campaign. Two of the offices had special police officers deputed to give handbills to every non-English-speaking man that applied for work. *The bills were not thrown around;* they were carefully handed to the man and the real importance of them explained. The Michigan State Free Employment Bureau enclosed with every work ticket a handbill giving the location of the night schools and urging attendance.

The Bureau of the Employers' Association does not secure work for the non-English speaking, or, in general, for laborers. These are turned away at the outside door. But the policeman in charge was instructed to see that every one of these men received a handbill. Every man that reaches the desk inside must show that he can at least write his name. Those that had difficulty in doing this were personally told about the night schools and urged to attend. The Employers' Association plans to follow up the night school campaign by making night school attendance a feature of their record slip and by detaining the men for whom they can do nothing because of lack of English and explaining to them, through interpreters engaged for the purpose, how largely getting work is dependent upon knowing English.

The Employers' Association through the head of the Labor Bureau sent out to all the members of the association a letter pointing out the responsibility of the employer for the success of the night schools, whether those for teaching English to foreigners or those for enabling young mechanics to increase their industrial efficiency by learning more than one process in their trade:

"Gentlemen: A great deal has been said, and much interest and enthusiasm aroused, over the education of the foreigner. Circulars as per copies enclosed have been distributed, and it is hoped liberally circulated in every plant. If you have not done this we urge your immediate attention. Supplies of the poster can be secured from the Board of Commerce, and of the pay-envelope circular from the Board of Education, or either or both from this office."

Other Cooperating Agents

Boy Scouts. On Wednesday, September 8, the same day on which the employers were requested at noon to call their men together and urge night school attendance, a large force of Boy Scouts covered the immigrant sections

of the city in a handbill distribution. This was arranged through the cooperation of the Boy Scout Commissioner. It was a clean cut piece of work, done with enthusiasm. On Sunday, the day before the opening of the night schools, a small squad of scouts again aided in distributing handbills at all the foreign language churches, of which Detroit has a large number. Every important mass or service was covered with handbills in the language used by the congregation.

Women's Club. The Twentieth Century Club, a woman's organization with a membership of eight hundred, organized a temporary committee to call up by telephone or to visit members and influential directors and patrons of various social organizations in order to secure their aid in arranging definite ways in which the particular organization could help the campaign.

Neighboring Educational Authorities. Highland Park has already been mentioned as a section outside the city limits, containing many immigrant homes, largely those of Ford workmen. The men that do not speak English are compelled to go to the Ford classes. But the women—and the homes—remain Southern European. The public education authorities of Highland Park, stirred by the campaign in Detroit, made an open declaration that it would take care of all immigrants that could be rallied, and it invited aid in making a Highland Park campaign, especially among the women. It also proposed to put the women's classes in the afternoon—a most important consideration, for few immigrant women feel that they can leave home at night.

Individuals. Various individuals contributed assistance of great value. Among these were the Federal Immigration Officer, and the Italian Vice-Consul, banker and steamship agent, who used his headquarters as a distribution centre for handbills and posters, arranged interviews with prominent Italians in his office, and in other ways assisted the campaign in the Italian section.

It happened that there were no fonts of Greek type available in Detroit and that the Greek Colony was therefore cut off from handbills and posters. The Board of Commerce appealed to a Greek merchant, an acknowledged leader of the Greek colony in Detroit, who called the Greeks of the colony together at his place and urged night school attendance, definitely pointed out why they should go, what they would learn and in what definite ways they would be assisted. He even went to the expense of having Greek handbills printed, ordering them from New York.

Americanization Posters

Nearly four thousand of the "Uncle Sam" night school posters, 20 x 32 in., in four colors and seven languages, were displayed at various advantageous places throughout Detroit.

The Walker Outdoor Advertising Company posted 500 of these on billboards throughout the city entirely free of charge.

Every social agency, settlement, clinic, etc., put them up at headquarters and in branch offices and in several cases assumed responsibility for getting them up, throughout a given immigrant section.

Factories placed them at favorable places throughout the plant.

Some of the social agencies with the assistance of workers from the Recreation Commission and other volunteers also took the posters to many small shops and saloons throughout all the immigrant sections. Armed with thumb tacks and posters, a force of workers covered the small shops of the various immigrant sections. The interest with which the man or woman storekeeper saw his own language under the figure of Uncle Sam, and the alacrity with which they sought the best display point in the shop, together with a certain dumb appeal in their *amazement* at being thus approached, told the workers the whole story of isolation and of separate interest. It was a spanning of a very deep divide.

Representatives of the Detroit Federation of Labor and also of the Brewery Workers and Bill Posters Union agreed to have their workers place the posters in saloons throughout the city with a recommendation to saloonkeepers to put them up and keep them up. There is a theory that the saloonkeeper is the foe of the night-school idea. He may be. But a number of Detroit saloonkeepers received, and put up, the posters with keen interest.

The employment agencies put them up where they could be seen by every waiting line.

Handbills

125,000 of the handbills advertising the night schools in seven languages and giving the location of the schools (see p. 15) were distributed throughout the immigrant sections. The distribution was in every case made by interested agents, and no bills were sown broadcast. They reached the people

they were meant to reach. In one case when, on account of the difficulties of rallying the Boy Scouts in vacation through their Scout Masters, the squad that was to look after the Italian section could not be hastily enough summoned, a squad of fifteen little Sicilian boy and girl "privates" dressed in their best, covered the whole Italian neighborhood in record time.

In addition to the general handbills, 15,000 handbills in Russian and in Polish only were distributed. A significant use of the Russian, besides at the Russian churches, was the distribution at a large meeting held in honor of the war victims of the year.

Employers Bulletin

The Michigan Workmen's Compensation Mutual Insurance Company issued a special night school bulletin to all employers on its list throughout Detroit and throughout Michigan with the following heading:

Michigan Workmen's Compensation Mutual Insurance Company

English Safety America} First

A Direct Appeal to All Employers in the City of Detroit

The folder contained definite suggestions as to how an employer might promote night school attendance among his men. It was especially appropriate for this agency to point out to its constituents the immediate connection between "English First" and "Safety First."

The Foreign Language Press

Foreign language editors gave their support; they came personally to the Board of Commerce to see those in charge of the campaign, giving their suggestions and accepting others. Three of them took over large numbers of the handbills for neighborhood distribution. The Polish Daily Record and the Italian Voce del Populo agreed to conduct a regular campaign in their columns up to the time of the night school opening. *Russian Life,* the *Italian Tribune,* and the *Hungarian News* were also especially active. Next to the priest perhaps no other medium can so effectively commend an American idea to the immigrant as the newspaper in his own tongue. It is important to enlist the undoubted power of the foreign language press in the work of Americanization. Many of them are keenly interested in it.

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English Press

From August 18 to the opening of the schools on September 13, some space was given every day to the night school campaign in the English press of Detroit, consisting of the Free Press, the News, the Journal and the Times. Frequently the night school stories were featured on the first page, and the editorial comment showed a realization of the broad civic aspect of the campaign.

The Detroit Journal, August 30:

"Detroit is an English-speaking American city struggling to assimilate groups of Europeans and Asiatics speaking all the tongues of Babel.

"To reduce that Babel to some uniformity in the knowledge of English, the Board of Education and the Board of Commerce, with the aid of employers and labor organizations, have united on a campaign to bring all foreigners into the night schools.

"*Foreigners are voted in droves by bosses, but English-speaking citizens of foreign birth can vote for themselves.*

"English means more jobs and easier work for the toiler. It means better results and better orders for the employer. This country belongs not to foreigners but to Americans, and foreigners can gain a share in it only by becoming Americans in speech and action and feeling.

"This educational campaign is economically wise, industrially shrewd, philanthropically just—it is also in the sanest sense patriotic."

The Detroit Free Press, August 30th, 1915:

"One of the most encouraging signs of Detroit's affairs at present is the attention being given to the night school program for the coming winter. Never before has the subject occupied so much space in the newspapers at this season of the year; never have so many citizens of prominence in all departments of the city's business given so much of their time and ability to it; never perhaps were the prospects for practically beneficial results from it so promising.

"Our whole school system is a vital part of our nation's existence, but of all the work done by educational processes, it seems as if none other held the possibilities that are latent in the night school classes. They attract the newcomer among us and the adults of longer residence, ardent to learn the rudiments of their chosen environment, bringing to their voluntary studies eager appetites for knowledge, and usually of an age when the full meaning of education is grasped. It is a fertile field they offer for ambitious instructors, and the harvest that it may yield with proper cultivation will endure far in the future."

The Detroit News, September 6th, 1915:

"It is a departure that seems highly commendable because it should make for a greater solidarity of the nation. A universal acquaintance with the English language is of advantage to every American citizen.

"As soon as a reasonable command of the language is acquired the natural prejudice that exists between the native born and the foreign born fades away because the English-speaking alien appears to be one of us, having yielded to the process of complete assimilation."

Other leading citizens of Detroit reinforced through the daily press the broad meaning of the night school campaign:

Judge Alfred J. Murphy, in the News-Tribune, Sunday, September 5:

"We have gone too long on the theory that the immigrant who desires to be a citizen can be one. We have commended him on the taking out of his first papers and left him for the five intervening years to manage the English language and acquire knowledge of the principles of the constitution as best he could.

"The present requirements for naturalization are by no means too high. They certainly should not be lower than they are. American citizenship should not come too easily. But the difficulties should be fair difficulties, not mechanical ones. The standards must be kept high, but the procedure should be as simple as the gravity of the process permits. Above all, the facility for acquiring the necessary educational qualifications for citizenship should be directly available to those desirous of attaining citizenship.

"The night school will simplify matters for those immigrants who are trying to become American citizens. In this respect it is an Immigrant Welfare Movement—but it is far more than this: *it is a movement to advance Americanism.* For when immigrants are prepared for citizenship in the public night schools, it will tend to secure uniformity in the standards for admission to citizenship. Such uniformity would assure that the man who comes up to file his petition and take out his final citizen paper really understands the obligation of citizenship, and is prepared to exercise its privileges intelligently.

"America needs to foster its ideal of citizenship. The night schools with a thorough teaching of the English language, and with a course in civics form a mighty step in this direction."

Charles B. Warren, President of the Board of Commerce, in the Free Press, Sunday, September 12:

"The night school campaign is properly a first step in a great civic experiment in Detroit. It is an experiment in the assimilation of the large foreign-born population which constitutes so large a part of Detroit's labor assets and plays so large a part in the city's social make-up.

"I am therefore especially pleased with the way in which the broad civic aspect of the campaign has been widely recognized in many different quarters. It is well to emphasize as we have emphasized, the practical advantage to employers in having English-speaking men in their factories, but the question is a much greater one than this alone, and it affects the public welfare on many other sides.

"It will increase interest in naturalization and it will define for all foreign-born residents, whether they are naturalized or not, exactly what the obligations, responsibilities and privileges of American citizenship and American residence are. It is a good thing to define these right now, and I believe it is a part of legitimate educational policy of the country to assume responsibility for doing this in a thorough and practical way."

Magazines

Night school material and articles were also carried in the Detroit Saturday Night, an important local weekly, the Electric Weekly, the Michigan Manufacturers and Financial Record, the Little Stick, and in four issues of the Detroiter, the organ of the Detroit Board of Commerce.

Moving Pictures

The moving picture department of the Ford Motor Company made a moving picture of the line at the Employers' Association Bureau, showing the turning away of men that cannot speak English, thus bringing out again how indispensable English is to getting work. This picture was shown in various theatres of Detroit and elsewhere. The Kunski Company, one of the large moving picture exchanges of Detroit had a slide showing the poster of Uncle Sam and the immigrant already described, displayed in various theatres.

Meetings

Several prominent foreign born citizens and workers addressed various racial meetings on the subject of the night schools. One of these also made an especial point of the Detroit plan at a tuberculosis convention at Grand

Rapids, attended by many persons from various cities and towns throughout the state.

Results

It is too soon to speak of the results of the night school campaign in Detroit—other than the 153% increase in registration—as final and consummated. The following facts and tendencies have, however, been noted:

1. *An increased feeling of responsibility on the part of employers.* This shows not only in the night school campaign, but in the establishment of new classes within separate industries.

2. *An increased interest on the part of the Board of Education in co-operating with employers and with other social agencies.*

3. *An increased interest in parochial night schools throughout the parishes of the city.* Especially, a new interest in the teaching of citizenship in the parochial citizenship classes.

4. *The opening of more private classes for immigrants* in settlements and social agencies.

5. *A greatly increased attention to methods* of teaching English and civics to foreigners. The Board of Commerce has had especially prepared a citizenship manual done with the immediate Detroit situation in view, and the Board of Education is officially using this. The Board of Education has scrutinized methods of teaching English, decided upon a modification of the dramatic method, secured the aid of experts and drawn up 100 lesson leaflets to cover the 100 nights in the night school term. Moreover, recognizing the too often neglected fact that very good teachers in day school often make poor night school teachers, the Board of Education has authorized the services of a field teacher, a young man distinguished for his interesting way of teaching English to foreigners in one of the big factories. He will go around among the schools, demonstrating methods to the various teachers, taking hold of classes that are beginning to lose interest and in other ways keeping up the quality of the actual instruction. The night school teachers are to meet occasionally and hold "experience" sessions.

6. *An increased understanding throughout Detroit of the social value of assimilating the foreign population.* This is shown in the attitude of both social agencies and of the general public.

7. *A gain in methods of co-operation on the part of various agencies,* and a realization that the assimilation of the immigrant is not a piece of "welfare" work, but a fundamental civic necessity.

8. *An increase in registration for the night schools* among young mechanics. The first night's registration in the high schools showed an increase of 25% over the previous year.

9. *A movement toward the establishment of a public night school policy* in other immigrant towns and communities in Michigan.

10. *A reinforcement of industrial peace;* an increased self respect among immigrant workmen, a better understanding between employers and workmen, and, therefore, a better basis for industrial adjustments.

11. *An invigorated understanding of the whole question of American citizenship throughout the city and state;* the first step of a concerted movement toward Americanization in the fullest sense of the word.

The immigrant is a powerful industrial, social and political factor. All the forces of industry, society and political wisdom are needed to accomplish his assimilation. In the Detroit experiment, imperfect and far from consummated as it is, is exemplified that unified cooperation of forces which alone can weld the many peoples of any community into one body politic, and create throughout the nation the unity and power that come from common ideals, a common language, a uniform interpretation of citizenship. A night school campaign for the English language and citizenship in every city and town is an immediate practical approach to the vast and complicated problem of assimilation. The end to be attained is a social ideal. And the ways and means are those of social cooperation involving every constructive factor in the civic organism.

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